



**2024**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
GOALS & STRATEGIES



**MONROE**  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

## Overview

The Monroe Chamber of Commerce's Mission is to create an environment where our local businesses **THRIVE**. We are committed to growing individual businesses and we are also committed to enhance all aspect of our community creating a positive environment for business. We are led by a dedicated staff and an army of volunteers who like us, have an unapologetic love for this place we call home.



**ROY  
HEATHERLY**  
President & CEO



**TERRI  
ARTHUR**  
GALA Director  
Finance Director



**DAPHNE  
GARRETT**  
Senior Director of Events  
and Programming



**MIKE  
DOWNHOUR**  
Director of Membership  
and Community Engagement



**ASHELY  
DOWLING**  
Membership Director

## Monroe Chamber of Commerce Staff

Roy Heatherly is our President and CEO, Terri Arthur is our Finance Director and is in charge of our annual Holiday GALA/Auction. Daphne Garrett oversees Leadership Ouachita, Young Professionals, and directs most of our events. Mike Downhour oversees Membership & Retention, our Ambassadors and plays a key role in our Total Resource sales.

# EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Our Executive Committee is the senior leadership of our Board of Directors. Jeremy Harrell is our Chair with Aimee Kane Incoming Chair and Jay Mulhern our Immediate Past Chair. The rest of our Executive Committee oversee our committees.



**JEREMY HARRELL**  
**Chairman 2024**  
Guaranty Bank



**AIMEE KANE**  
**Chairman 2025**  
Finance



**JAY MULHERN**  
**Chairman 2023**  
Express Employment  
Professionals



**ETHAN HUNT**  
**VP of Finance**  
NELA Title Company



**LEANN BOND**  
**VP Health**  
VCOM



**JASMYNE MCCONNELL**  
**VP Membership, Small  
Business, & Diversity**  
Cajun Title Co.



**COLBY WALKER**  
**VP Community  
Engagement**  
InterMountain Renovations



**MATT DICKERSON**  
Pulpmill Services Inc.



**AMANDA EDGE**  
Entergy

# COMMITTEES

The Monroe Chamber of Commerce has 11 committees that focus on all aspects of our community building that environment where our local businesses THRIVE.



**JASMYNE MCCONNELL**  
**VP Membership, Small Business, & Diversity**  
Cajun Title Co.

## SMALL BUSINESS

### Goal

The Chamber will identify small business needs and work with area providers on bringing additional support and benefit to those businesses. We also where possible promote individual businesses.

### 2023 Accomplishments

1. Ran a Shop Local Eat Local Campaign (November & December)
2. Held numerous Small Business Workshops hosted by Christina Davis through an LED Grant
  - a. Round 2 will be focused on Richwood & Sterlington Merchants.
3. Supported Discover Monroe/West Monroe during Restaurant Week.

### 2024 Goals

- Reconvene a Small Business Committee.
- Lunch N Learn - Develop a series of lunch n learns for our membership. Work with area groups like SHRM, Legal Help and LSBDC.
- Roundtables - host a series of roundtables to find out ways to help our small businesses.
- Continue our Coffee & Conversations monthly.
- Continue to work with the City of Monroe on their "oneroe" strategy and small business coffee's.
- Participate in the Black Business Expo.
- Meet with Matt Dickerson and see how small business can support NELA MAC.
- Meet with Non-Profit group.
- Support the Digital Resource Hub.

# MEMBERSHIP

## Goal

The Chamber will maintain and grow our role as the advocate for all business and its members.

## 2023 Accomplishments

1. Held Membership Drive in January / February 2023 - netted 363 new or upgraded members.
2. Revamped membership rates.
3. Social Media to celebrate members.
4. Hired Mike Downhour.
5. Revamped Ambassadors
6. Revamped retention efforts.
  - a. Data base clean up and touching members (Ongoing)
7. Coffee & Conversation
8. Young Professionals
9. Ambassadors
10. Leadership Ouachita
11. 75 Ribbon Cuttings
12. Held our annual TH Scott Awards - over 40 businesses nominated.
13. Held our annual Top 20 Under 40 Awards Ceremony - 88 emerging leaders nominated.
14. Held our annual Golf Tournament at Frenchman's Bend.
15. Annual Banquet - Jimmy Cusano and Keynote - John Robert Smith - Transportation of America.
16. Newsletter
17. Revamped our By-Laws.

## 2024 Goals

- Reconvene a Membership committee
- Hold a Membership Retention event on April 3rd. Goal of 1+ from member drive
- Retention Program - upgrade our current retention program
- Sterlington and Richwood - Develop and a launch a year long program for Sterlington & Richwood which includes a group membership
- Continue to grow Ambassadors
- Continue to grow Young Professionals
- Continue to grow Leadership Ouachita
  - Explore creating a Leadership Ouachita Alumni Group
- Hold Annual Golf Tournament and The Holiday Gala.
- Upgrade our TH Scott Awards - bring the family back into the planning
- Hold our Annual Top 20 Under 40 event
- Conduct our Annual Banquet
- Conduct our Golf Tournament
- Continue to hold Ribbon Cutting Celebrations with a follow up Selfie Spotlight effort from our Ambassadors
- Continue Coffee & Conversation
- Create 2 New Events
  - Flags of Freedom
  - Bourbon and Cigars



**JAMES MILES**  
Pelican State Credit Union

## DIVERSITY

### Goal

The Chamber will take a lead role in being inclusive to all parts of our city, parish and region while being the leading voice for diversity.

### 2023 Accomplishments

- Hosted 3 well attended lunches on DEI. Darian Atkins presented at each lunch.

### 2024 Goals

- Replace James Miles as chair.
  - We have targeted a potential Chair to talk too
- Small Business
  - Assist in Business Development Program for Richwood and Sterlington
- Work with the City of Monroe with their City Start program



**COLBY WALKER**  
**VP Community Engagement**  
InterMountain Renovations

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

### Goal

The Chamber will maintain and grow our role as the chief advocate, voice, and watchdog for local business on governmental matters.

### 2023 Accomplishments

1. Support the Multi Media Campaign in progress.
2. Revamped the "Inside the Chamber" magazine.
3. Small Business Podcast
4. Video meetings
5. Bi-weekly Louisiana Living.
6. Support the Leaders of Change campaign.

### 2024 Goals

- Complete Leaders of Change Community Pride Campaign.
  - Wall Mural at the Monroe Regional Airport.
  - Launch series of videos and podcast
  - Merchandise - explore ways to sell Monroe Merchandise during the holidays.
  - Develop a 2025 strategy
- Social Media - include Linked In and more video with FB Live.
  - KNOE is showing our events on FB Live.
- Update our Inside the Chamber Magazine project.
- Explore a City Pride Projects Flag Project.
- Support Restaurant Week.
- Continue to use our website, Facebook, all social media and newsletter to celebrate our members and community.



**AMANDA EDGE**

Entergy

## GOVERNMENT ADVOCACY

### Goal

The Chamber will maintain and grow our role as the chief advocate, voice, and watchdog for local business on governmental matters.

### 2023 Accomplishments

1. Numerous meetings with elected officials and taxing bodies.
  - a. Dr. Brumley
  - b. Shane Smiley / Brad Cammack
  - c. Dr. Vidrine
  - d. Mayor Ellis
2. Hosted 318 Night Washington Mardi Gras
3. Participated in a week long visit to DC for Mardi Gras
4. Hosted Senator Cassidy Luncheon
5. Hosted Congresswoman Letlow Luncheon
6. Northern Exposure
  - a. Hosted Breakfast for the Children's Museum and Bio-Medical Research and Innovation Park.
7. Hosted NELA Delegation Luncheon
8. Hosted Governor Edwards Luncheon
9. Hosted State of Local Government - included Sterlington and Richwood.
10. Co-Hosted Forum at ULM for Governor, State Senate and State Representative candidates.
11. Co-Hosted Forum for All Police Jury Candidates.
12. Co-Hosting Economic Luncheon for DC Mardi Gras this year.
13. Will be Co-Hosting Forum for Mayor and City Council candidates (February)



## 2024 Goals

- April 8 - Jeremy Harrell Amanda Edge and Roy Heatherly held a call to discuss goals for our Governmental Advocacy Group
- To explore ways to partner with the West Monroe West Ouachita Chamber of Commerce on Governmental activity
  - Host legislative breakfast during the 2024 session April 11th event canceled, to be rescheduled)
  - Meeting held on April 12th with WMWO Governmental Group
    - Co-brand on Federal and State luncheons. No revenue impact to Monroe
    - Co-brand on new events from WMWO
    - Form Committee, including Daphne, in mid to late summer to re-evaluate and retool Northern Exposure
    - Share Governmental Meeting times
      - Co-meet with taxing bodies
- Continue to host governmental luncheons
- Washington Mardi Gras - Co-Host the Economic Development luncheon in January at the Washington Mardi Gras event
- Host 318 Night the week prior to DC Mardi Gras
- Develop a Strategy for 2025 Mardi Gras with city and ULM. Include LDCC
- Forum - Co-Host with KEDM and WMWO Chamber a 5th congressional forum in the fall



**John Jones**



**Greg Pritchard**



**Hunter McFadden**

## TECHNOLOGY

### Goal

The Chamber will maintain and grow our role as the chief business advocate by being a champion for the advancement of technology to both home and commercial. Technology influences our businesses, our schools, our healthcare and almost every aspect of our lives. The Chamber recognizes that broadband technology constantly evolves, and that speed, capacity and affordability are key consumer issues in respect to subscribership.

### 2023 Accomplishments

1. Social Savvy Workshop
2. 2nd Annual Cyber Security Summit

### 2024 Goals

- Greg Pritchard and Hunter McFadden (GreenQube) have agreed to chair
- Social Savvy Workshop - hold at least one social media workshop for members
- 3rd Annual Cyber Security Summit - hold our third annual Cyber Security Summit in the fall
- Work with Workforce to focus on Work at Home workers
- Create a Digital Work Resource Hub
- Assist Workforce and Education committees in a joint workforce / education task force.
- Online Resource sessions



**KIRSTEN GLADEN**  
Catholic Charities of NELA

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## NON-PROFITS

### Goal

The Monroe Chamber will work with area nonprofits to raise them up to help others in our community. The Chamber realizes our business community will only be as strong as our weakest and it is incumbent on us to work with area nonprofits to raise them up.

### 2023 Accomplishments

1. Hosted numerous non-profits at a brainstorming session at Ascent.
2. Hosted a Grant Writing Workshop and State of Non-Profit's Summit.
3. United Way Pacesetter Campaign - 100%

### 2024 Goals

- Grant Writer - explore how the chamber can help the business community and the nonprofit community with Grant Writing
- Meet with local nonprofits on how we can help them
  - Marketing
  - Administrative support
- Partner with the United Way



**MATT DICKERSON**  
Midsouth Extrusion

## WORKFORCE

### Goal

**The Chamber will maintain and grow our role as the facilitator and champion of our workforce in our region. We will work with local business, education, and other partners to recruit, grow, and retain talent.**

### 2023 Accomplishments

1. Contracted Matt Dickerson to work on workforce. Identifying all stakeholders and bringing them to the table - building a unified voice for workforce needs and solutions.
2. NELEA / NLEP
  - a. We continue to be part of the group working to re-structure and rehire NELEA.
3. Neville Night - we hosted a career night for Neville Seniors and their parents.
4. Career Fair - Matt led a unified group, including K-12 in an all day career fair. We will follow with a job fair in the spring.
5. NELA MAC
  - a. Support NELAMAC in their efforts to tell the manufacturing story in Northeast Louisiana.
  - b. Manufacturing Day - Helped sponsor a Manufacturing Day.
6. Superintendent Meeting - Met with Superintendent Todd Guice to begin conversations with OP Schools.
7. Hosted LABI Lunch
8. Spring Job Fair
9. Co-sponsored Economic Summit at the Clarke Williams Innovation Center.
10. Co-sponsored Pelican Cup

## 2024 Goals

- Number one goal is to participate, collaborate and lead the organization of a regional task force on workforce
- NELEA -Continue to work with the rebuilding of NELEA. First in hiring an Executive Director, then working with the new director to implement their program of work. Workforce and organizing our regional chambers is an area we can compliment their efforts
- Continue to promote and support NELA MAC
- Work at Home - Identify those in our area working at home and develop a strategy to include them in our efforts and find ways to support them so they are not isolated
- Business Hub
  - Develop a Business Resource Digital Hub and market it to support all business in our area
- Lunch N Learns - Develop a series of Lunch N Learns for our membership targeting specific needs
- Entrepreneurs - Work with La. Catalyst and LSBDC to develop a strategy to support area entrepreneurs. Continue to support the Pelican Cup
- LABI - Host our annual LABI lunch - introduce Will Green to business community - ongoing sharing of LABI's program of works
- Job Fair - co-host a spring or fall job/career fair



**Matt Dickerson**  
Midsouth Extrusion



**Maggie Generoso**  
Monroe City Schools

## EDUCATION

### Goal

The Chamber will continue to support all ages of education (birth through continuing ed).

### 2023 Accomplishments

1. Banners at all Monroe City Schools
2. Adopt A School - this is struggling - we need a strategy
3. Hosted Dr. Brumley
4. Hosted Vision Lunch
5. Hosted Accent Reception
6. Hosted Coding Camp - July 2023
7. Sponsored STEAM education through Children's Museum with Parish (K-3) schools.

### 2024 Goals

- Number one goal is to participate, collaborate and lead the organization of a regional task force on Education.
- Fix the city school banners that have fallen.
- Identify opportunities that assist education and workforce together.
- Sponsor K-3 STEM program for Ouachita Parish Schools - Through NELA Children's Museum.
- Re-examine our Accent and Vision events - can they be combined?
- Explore bringing back a High School Leadership Group.



**LEANN BOND**  
**VP Health**  
**VCOM**

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## HEALTHCARE

### Goal

To create a healthcare team that would help the Chamber to address the challenges impacting our medical community. As an actionable item, the Healthcare Advocacy Team (HCA) has been devised. Its diverse representation of medical and specialty organizations will seek to enhance the Chambers healthcare related strategic plans.

### 2023 Accomplishments

1. Medical Moments
2. Leann Bond - New Healthcare Chair

### 2024 Goals

- Contact and add local experts from the Health Insurance and Mental Health fields to our committee. This will address the two areas from the 2022 Health Survey. We also agreed that we would like to acknowledge and focus on our Maternal Health crisis as well as the issue of quality Childcare services.
- Collaborate with other Chamber committees, such as Government, Workforce and Technology Committees, to exchange information concerning local and state Healthcare topics. We plan to launch a project using agreed upon positive meta data for our city and the region. We hope to engage the Chamber membership in this project while improving Monroe and this region's SEO. This will positively affect the Health and Wellness industry as well as all others.
- Create an updated Health Survey seeking input concerning healthcare and wellness gaps that the business community should be aware of and possibly tackle. This feedback will also guide our committee moving forward giving us insight for future actions.



**ETHAN HUNT**  
**VP of Finance**  
NELA Title Company

## FINANCE

Our Finance committee is our financial watchdogs. They meet monthly to review The Chamber's previous month's financial performance and our year to date performances. They help ensure our financial accuracy. The Chamber conducts an audit every year. Our past audit was conducted by Cameron & Hines. We are pleased to report a great audit.

### 2023 Accomplishments

1. Finished up \$6,500
2. Clean Audit
3. Ethan Hunt - New Finance Chair

### 2024 Goals

- Community Foundation - create sub-committee to explore creating or assisting in creating a community foundation for our area.
- Staffing - once the strategic plan is set look at current staff and where do we have gaps. In order to grow and implement many of the new efforts we will need resources that include staff.
- Capital Campaign - pending growth strategies - create a subcommittee to explore a 2025 (5 year) Capital Campaign that would support Chamber initiatives and growth.
- Annual Audit

## NEW IN 2024

- **ULM**
  - Connect the business community to our University
- **Supporting Quality of Life - The Arts**
  - Support quality of life in Monroe through the arts



## AFFINITY GROUPS

### **Ambassadors:**

The Monroe Chamber of Commerce Ambassadors are our lifeline to membership. Our ambassadors act as an extension and diplomat for the chamber leadership. They meet monthly at lunch to learn more about the Chamber and go to ribbon cuttings, ground breakings, and make visits to our members. Josh Carroll with SNAPme Creative is our Chair. There is no financial commitment, and we have no membership limit. For more information contact Mike Downhour - [mdownhour@monroe.org](mailto:mdownhour@monroe.org).

### **Young Professionals:**

The Monroe Chamber of Commerce's Young Professionals is a thriving organization of the area's brightest new leaders. Our Young Professionals meet the second Tuesday of each month at Tower Place to network and hear presentations from area leaders. Our Young Professionals are led by Patience Talley (LDCC) and their goals are to develop leadership, communication, and organizational skills through practical experience within an organization. Furthermore, they gain a sense of responsibility and empowerment through working within their community. For more information contact Daphne Garrett - [dgarrett@monroe.org](mailto:dgarrett@monroe.org).

### **Leadership Ouachita:**

The Monroe Chamber of Commerce has been identifying leaders to strengthen the community by broadening and enhancing the leadership base. The purpose of the program is to develop and empower the emerging leaders of northeast Louisiana to transform the region into a place recognized as one of the best places to live and do business. For more information contact Daphne Garrett - [dgarrett@monroe.org](mailto:dgarrett@monroe.org).

## EVENTS

### Coffee & Conversation

The Monroe Chamber host a series of monthly coffees to build individual networks, learn about our community and have fun.

### Updates and Luncheons

One of our biggest strengths is to host legislative luncheons and updates from elected officials and taxing bodies. We bring decision makers to the our members for updates and information that effects our community and individual businesses.

### Celebrations

Monroe has such a bright and hopeful future. Everything we do is a celebration. Whether it be a ribbon cutting, Golf Tournament, GALA's and more.

### Educational

Our members benefit from our workshops and summits that update them on important information that impacts their business.



## LEADERS OF CHANGE / IT'S A BEAUTIFUL DAY

We believe every day in Monroe and Ouachita Parish is a BEAUTIFUL Day. The Monroe Chamber of Commerce joined 8 local businesses who have an unapologetic love for our community. Throughout 2024 you will see and hear the Chamber and our Leaders of Change champion a positive message about our home. Our goal is to change Hearts and Mouths. Our goal is to tell our story as only we can. We are our story, and it is a beautiful ongoing story of us. You will see us on TV, hear us on the radio, see us on videos, see and hear us on social media, see us in Bayou Life, Ouachita Citizen and see us at the airport in a beautiful wall mural.





## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Our Board of Directors are the game changers and difference makers in our community. They are dedicated and committed to growing our community. Like our staff they have an unapologetic love for our chamber and community. They are Hall of Fame Volunteers.



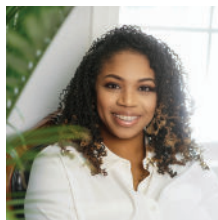
**ETHAN HUNT**  
VP of Finance  
NELA Title Company



**DR. WENDI TOSTENSON**  
VP Workforce Development  
La. Delta Community College



**PAUL HUTCHESON**  
VP Government/Non-Profit  
Homeland Bank



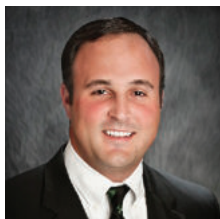
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VP Membership, Small  
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VP Health  
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**COLBY WALKER**  
VP Community Engagement  
InterMountain Renovations



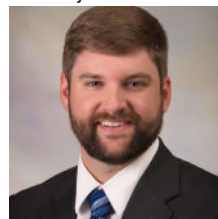
**JEFF LAUDENHEIMER**  
Commercial Capital Bank



**SHELVA THOMAS**  
Monroe Housing Authority



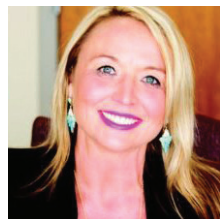
**JOSH CARROLL**  
SnapMe Creative



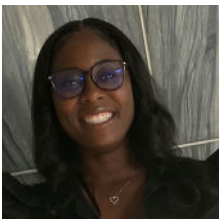
**BRAD BELL**  
American National Insurance



**ALANA COOPER**  
Discover Monroe-West Monroe



**AMANDA EDGE**  
Entergy



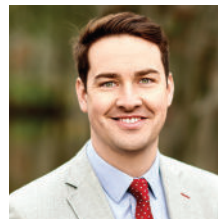
**ALISHA WOODS**  
Woods Family Estates, LLC



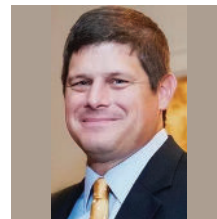
**DR. RON BERRY**  
ULM



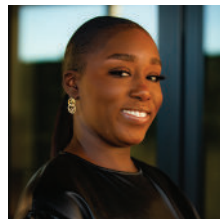
**MATT DICKERSON**  
Midsouth Extrusion



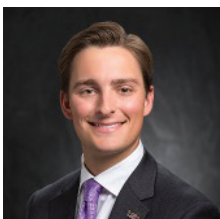
**MARK SISK**  
ReMax



**CHRIS HOLYFIELD**  
Holyfield Construction



**KIRSTEN GLADEN**  
Catholic Charities of NELA



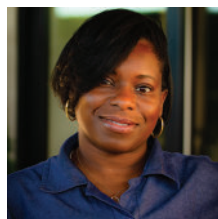
**MARK KENT ANDERSON**  
Mid-South Extrusion



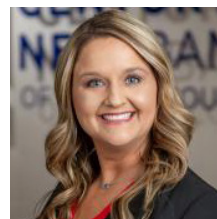
**ALBERTA GREEN**  
ABG Counseling and Career



**MARK RANDOLPH**  
Ochsner LSU Health Monroe



**CHRISTINA DAVIS**  
LA SBDC



**COURTNIE BEACH**  
Century Next Bank



**LEAH DOUGAN**  
Robertson Produce



**MATT WHITE**  
Drax



**JOSH ETHERIDGE**  
Etheridge Pipeline & Conduit



**RANDY STONE**  
KTVE/KARD



**JAMES MILES**  
Pelican State Credit Union



**TAYLOR CAGLE**  
Origin Bank



**MICKY MCCARTY**  
Neville High School



**LAMONT WINDOM**



**PASTOR IKE BYRD**  
Mt. Zion Baptist Church



**ANGELA CRUMPTON**  
Ouachita Parish Schools



**KELSEY MCCRARY**  
City of Monroe



**PATIENCE TALLEY**  
LA DCC



**JANET DURDEN**  
United Way of NELA